

Intermittent Fever
An Essay
on
Intermittent Fever
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Intermittent Fever

Intermittent Fever is a disease, which consists of fits or paroxysms, which are divided into three distinct stages; called the cold, hot, and sweating: these paroxysms occur with considerable periodicity, the interval between each is called the *Aggravia*. The length of the *Aggravia* marks the type of the disease, if it is of twenty four hours continuance, it is the *Quotidian*; forty eight the *Tertian*, and seventy two the *Quartan*.

The *premonitory* symptoms are lassitude, languor, a sense of weariness over the body, headache, stupor, pain in the loins and extremities, blueness of the nails, and a numbness of the fingers and toes.

Cold Stage.— After these symptoms have continued for a short time, the extremities

begin to feel cold, which soon spreads over the whole body becoming intensely distressing, causing a sensation as though cold water was running down the back, this feeling of coldness becomes almost insupportable; there is chattering of the teeth, hurried, anxious and oppressed respiration; the pulse is variable, may be weak and oppressed, quick and intermitting, or scarcely perceptible; there is headache, and in severe cases coma or delirium. The eyes sunken, the features become sharp, complexion livid; rigors of children sometimes run on to convulsions: the duration of this stage is from a few minutes to four hours, terminating in the hot stage sometimes by vomiting or nausea.

Hot Stage.— Is characterized by hot

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and dry skin, dry mouth with thirst, full, strong and frequent pulse, scanty deep coloured urine without sediment, hurried and anxious breathing, occasionally cerebral disturbances with delirium, this continues from four to twelve hours.

Sweating Stage.— This manifests itself by the appearance perspiration on the forehead, which is soon diffused over other parts of the body, often becoming profuse and drenching. There is now a marked amelioration of the previous symptoms, which continues until relief takes place and the aggravia supervenes.

These different stages are liable to much variation, one in severity may predominate over the others, there may be a slight development or disproportioned continuance

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of the different stages, yet by the distinct character and periodicity of the paroxysms, the diagnosis of the disease is a matter of but little difficulty.

During the Agryxia the patient often enjoys an entire freedom from pain or any troublesome symptoms, except debility, languor and loss of appetite; unless the disease should have continued a long time, or be complicated with some other affection.

These fevers are sometimes of such an intractable character, as to baffle the best directed efforts of the Physician for some length of time; often passing into a chronic form: yet it is said there is a tendency of the disease to terminate spontaneously, after a certain number of paroxysms; provided they are of a simple and

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regular character: Quotidians have a disposition to terminate on the seventh day, Tertians on the fourteenth, and Quartans on the forty second day. There is likewise a tendency to relapses, at these periods of the disease, should they not have been radically cured at the commencement of the treatment.

Intermittent Fever may be complicated with other affections, or the disease may pass into nervous, inflammatory or remittent fever and become fatal; but of themselves they are rarely so in temperate climates. In hot latitudes they often assume a highly malignant and fatal character. In their mild form they sometimes inflict much injury to the constitution, by the debility they produce; by obstructions

and induration of the liver and spleen,
and by their tendency to the production
of dropsical affections. If death takes place
as the effect of the disease itself, it is
from collapse, from an absence of perspi-
ration or a state of apoplexy.

The most prominent cause, is the
miasmata arising from the decay of vege-
table matter during hot weather, in low
and marshy countries, from stagnant pools
of water, along the banks of rivers, from
the exposure of the virgin soil of Western
and Prairie lands by cultivation, or from
the exposure of large quantities of silicious
matter during excavations for rail roads
cellars &c. it may also arise from exposure
to cold and wet, errors in diet, and
from intestinal irritation, and sometimes

As a general thing, remedies in this affection should be administered during the apyrexia.

The following are some of the medicines called for in this disease—Cinchona, Arsenicum album, Specacuanha, Nuxvomica, Pulsatilla, Natrium Muraticum, Ignatia, Antimonium crudum, Eupatorium perfoliatum, Carbo vegetabilis, Lachesis, and Bryonia.

Cinchona.— Is applicable to those fevers, which have their origin in marsh miasmata. It is indicated where there is languor, headache, anxiety and palpitation of the heart, nausea, and pain in the bowels before or at the commencement of the fever; adipsia during the cold and hot stage, with thirst during the sweating and sometimes

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during the apyrexia; alternate shiverings and heat; heat in the head, dry and burning lips and mouth, with redness and heat in the face; frequently with chilliness in all other parts of the body; cold sweat on the forehead, great weakness during and after the paroxysms, yellow complexion, pain, soreness or swelling of the liver or spleen. It is applicable to those of a Tertian type, and when it occurs epidemically.

Arsenicum Album.— Is indicated where the paroxysms are well marked in regard to their periodicity, but where the different stages are not well developed, there being a mingling or alternating of the sensations of the cold and hot stages, often with more or less delay of the

appearance of perspiration. There is restlessness, much thirst with an inclination to drink but little at a time, flushes of heat on speaking or moving; depression and prostration of strength, violent burning pain in the stomach with nausea and vomiting. Is suitable to fevers of the Tertian or Quartan type, and where the rigors come on in the afternoon or evening.

Specacuanha.— This medicine like Cinchona, is well adapted to fevers occurring in marshy districts. The particular indications are an aggravation of shivering by external heat, much shivering with little heat, or much heat with little shivering; there is but little thirst, considerable gastric derangement with dryness of the mouth,

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nausea, vomiting, clean or coated tongue,
and some oppression of the chest. It is not
always capable of effecting a cure within
itself, yet it so changes or modifies the
disease, that it readily yields to some
other remedy.

Nux Vomica.— Where there is weakness
and prostration at the commencement of
the fever, where the chills and heat are com-
mingled, heat in the face with coldness of
the rest of the body, burning pain in the
eyes, with giddiness of the head; tremblings
of the limbs with cramps in the calves
of the legs and feet, coldness and blueness
of the hands and feet, headache and
humming in the ears during the heat; heat
in the face with redness of the cheeks, thirst
during the shivering and heat. Gastric

derangement such as anorexia, dislike to bread, bitter and sour eructations, where there is constipation; and where the paroxysms take place in the morning and are of the Quotidian or Tertian type.

Pulsatilla.— This remedy is applicable where there is a complication with gastric or bilious symptoms, where the patient has been improperly treated with large doses of Cinchona; where the slightest indigestion causes a relapse, and to those of a Tertian type; is suitable to females and to persons of a mild disposition. The particular indications are bitter taste in the mouth, slimy, bilious or sour vomiting; diarrhoea or constipation, violent thirst during the heat, simultaneous shivering and heat, anxiety and oppression of the chest.

Natrium Muriaticum.— Where there is prolonged shivering, thirst during both the cold and hot stage, headache pain in the bones, debility, sallow complexion, ulcerations in the corners of the mouth, dryness of the tongue, with bitter taste; with much tenderness of the scrobiculus to the touch.

Iguatia.— Where there is a mitigation of cold by the application of external heat, thirst during the chills, shivering with colic, afterwards weakness and sleepiness with burning heat; alternate redness and paleness of the face, and when the fever comes on in the afternoon or at night.

Antimonium Crudum.— Is indicated where the perspiration breaks out simultaneously with accesses of heat, then

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suddenly disappearing leaving the skin
dry and hot; where there is slight thirst,
coated tongue, bitter taste, eructations,
want of appetite, and to those of the Ter-
tian type.

Eupatorium Perfoliatum.— When the
chills come on in the morning or forenoon,
attended or followed by nausea and
vomiting, where the perspiration is
slight or altogether wanting, thirst
before the chill, aching of the bones
of the extremities with soreness of
the flesh.

Carbo Vegetabilis.— Is indicated
when throbbing at the temples, aching
of the teeth and bones of the extre-
mities, and coldness of the feet pre-
cede the paroxysm: thirst only during

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the shivering; and for those which have been generated in warm and swampy countries.

Lachesis. — During the heat, violent headache, delirium, redness of the face, great thirst, great weakness and rapid prostration of strength during the apyrexia; heat at night with perspiration in the morning.

Bayoniac Predominance of heat followed by shivering; headache, vertigo, thickly coated tongue, aversion to food, nausea with excessive thirst.

These are some of the most important remedies in this disease, yet the whole morbid picture of each individual case should be well considered, and in doing this a great

variety of remedies may be consulted.
It has given the Physician much trouble
partly owing to the impatience of the
patient and in a great many instances
to the want of proper action of the remedies

This disease is the effect of some im-
ponderable miasms on the organism and
in nature there certainly can be found
an antidote